This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

RAYS OF CONSOLATION

FROM

A SWISS VALLEY

141. m.

909.

Rays of Consolation

FROM

A SWISS VALLEY.

BY

PASTEUR CH. CHATELANAT,

PASTEUR OF AIGLE, CANTON DE VAUD.

Translated by Lady Rohart.

BIBLIOTHECA
DEC 80
BODLEIANA.

EDINBURGH:
JAMES TAYLOR, 31 CASTLE STREET.
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.

MDCCCLXXVII.

141. m. 909

TO

THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY

OF

JESUS CHRIST,

THE SAME YESTERDAY, *TO-DAY*, AND FOR EVER,

A MAN OF SORROWS,

AND

ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF.

SURELY, HE HATH BORNE OUR GRIEFS, AND CARRIED OUR SORROWS, ... AND WITH HIS STRIPES

WE ARE HEALED.

PREFACE.

'The God of all comfort; . . . . comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in *any* trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.'—2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

These words of St Paul give the cause of the following pages having been written, and of their having been translated.

The original work, 'Consolation,'* was written by M. Chatelanat, after an illness extending over many years. That it was one of intense suffering, none of his readers can fail to be conscious; but throughout, the humble acquiescent spirit of an earnest, trusting heart, seems to be ever waiting on the Lord, and ever echoing the Prophet's expectation, 'He hath torn, and *He will heal* us; He hath smitten, and *He will bind* us up.'

The chief object of the book seems to be, to teach all those who are afflicted, and cast down, *how to*

* Published by Georges Bridel, Lausanne.

suffer as Christians should suffer. Only those who have been tried know how much such teaching is needed, when unexpected storms of temptation and sin arise upon souls that are in the midst of a great fight of afflictions. Thanks be to God, that, from even these stains, such may wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, and will yet *stand* before the Throne of God, and *serve Him* . . . . and *He* . . . . shall *dwell among them.*

Those who have suffered little may deal lightly with trial, but our Saviour tenderly recognises its *power*, when, in His Word, He condescends to call Himself the *Man of Sorrows*, and gives the assurance that 'for the *comfortless troubles'* sake of the needy, *I* will up . . . . and will help . . . . and will set him at rest.' It is to the reality of this personal sympathy of Jesus with troubled spirits, that M. Chatelanat leads his readers, whilst he teaches them how to find the will of God to be not only 'good' and 'perfect,' but that it must also be '*acceptable*' even unto suffering.

Besides this work, 'Consolation,' M. Chatelanat has also written a valuable book, called 'Siloë;' two books of Hymns, and one of Meditations and Prayers for Invalids.

Thus fourteen years of illness have brought forth 'peaceable fruit' in one 'exercised thereby'—who

has learnt, as he writes, to regard 'la famille des affligés comme ma meilleure famille,'—and it is because he has been in the depths himself, that he knows *what* they *are*, and *how* to apply the Good Physician's balm to tried and wounded hearts.

The following pages have been translated in the earnest desire that this help may be extended to the many sad ones in our own country who are unable to read them in the French language, that they may thus be soothed and strengthened by the freshness of the fervent thoughts which run through M. Chatelanat's writings.

May the Lord fulfil the prayer of the author and of the translator, that He will Himself use this little book to do good unto troubled ones, in fulfilling His own gracious assurance—'I, even *I*, am He that *comforteth you.*'

CATHERINE A. HOBART.

LONDON, *October* 1877.

CONTENTS.

TO M. M.

You have asked me to give you consolations—it is a consolation to your invalid Pastor to send you these feeble pages, with the Word of the Lord. They have been all written in the early morning hours, when I like to open my window to breathe pure and vivifying air, to contemplate Mont Blanc in her virginal majesty, and to raise my heart higher towards the mountains from whence cometh my help.

You need not expect many new things, or many deep thoughts; your kindness will know how to find here, perhaps, that sympathy which is at the same time the treasure and the privilege of the afflicted. *To suffer*, is *to worship;* those who have suffered will understand me; those to whom God has spared suffering have no right to be severe. The tried one does not ask for arguments, but for some drops of that living water which springeth up into everlasting life. Sickness wants its consolations, and convalescence also claims its own; weak or strong, let us then be instructed by Him Who has expiated our sins, and Who would also carry our griefs. Let

us remember that trial is at once a chastisement of sin, and a discipline of love. To answer this double end of the tender Father, Who only chastises us because He loves us, let us seek *sanctification*, even before we claim *consolation:* the latter flows from the first; the one from the other; never one without the other. Have dread of sin, not of suffering; but it is a grand thing to know and to love Jesus, by Whom we can triumph over both of these. When Jesus sends a cross, and helps us to bear it, the cross is in reality the best thing in life. Oh, that the Lord may grant to His afflicted people to have this experience!

If the Lord will make use of this little book to do some little good to your soul, I shall thank Him on my knees. Take good courage, and let hearts be raised on high. *Certainly* Jesus will come *soon;* between these two words, should there henceforth be room for our fears?

That the God of peace may give you peace always by all means, is the desire of

Your brother in Jesus,

CH. CHATELANAT.

MAY 25, 1865.

Preface to the Second Edition.

'My tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.'
'Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord.'

In beginning another year, my heart is full of compassion for all those who suffer, and I desire to give them some words of consolation. I ask them of God, who is the Author of all excellent grace, and the Source of all true consolation. I shall speak of that which I have tested, and of that which I feel, endeavouring always to take my place under the eye of the God of truth, and in the school of the Holy Spirit.

There is here no plan or method; these pages, simple effusions of sympathy, are the cry of a tried heart which seeks to obey a command of the Lord, '*Comfort ye, comfort ye My people*,' saith our God. May the Lord pardon all that has been written in ignorance or in infirmity: may He bless to His glory the few grains of seed which shall fall, as into good ground, into hearts ploughed up by trial.

January 1867.

RAYS FROM A SWISS VALLEY.

Suffering with Jesus.

'Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in Thee: let me not be ashamed.'—Ps. xxv. 1, 2.

'I AM the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.' Oh, all ye that would say these words with the bitterness of a heart wounded in the great combat of life, forget ye not to add always, with another prophet of God, 'Behold, we count them happy which endure!'

To suffer, always to suffer, to suffer because of the sin which is in us and around us, for the cause of God in the face of evil, for the cause of God against ourselves—to suffer for the trial of our faith, and for the punishment of our unbelief—to suffer from the sight of suffering,—what a path! and yet it is the right

path, for at the end is a crown of glory. Like Jesus, we must be consecrated by suffering to realise true life; be ready to die, so as to be supremely loved. We must suffer, to understand well our own nothingness, and to learn to look up always. This is the right school. Thus we learn something, for thus we learn to see ourselves as helpless as we really are before God, and to feel His great condescension.

The Divine Husband has inaugurated the tomb like a temple. He has risen victorious from the grave; and the wife also shall rise, for she looks for a day when she shall be *with Him* in His glory. For the moment 'the napkin' (the Head) is 'wrapped together by itself,' and 'the linen clothes' (the body) are left apparently 'lying' in disorder. But patience! love remaineth; there will be an end to the combat. Take courage, then, at any cost take courage, all ye who suffer; hold firmly the victory; hold fast that which ye *have*, and raise your hearts on high. If we suffer *with Him*, we shall reign *with Him*.

O all ye who suffer, look to Jesus, to the Rock whence ye have been hewn, and take courage. Look to the thousands who have suffered with Jesus, and who, having conquered through

His victory, now reign by His side. Look even to all those near you who suffer, and who are patiently pointing out the path to you; and when you have not the strength to believe, nor the strength to pray nor to fight, still raise up to the cross one prayerful *look*, just one, *to be saved!*

And Thou, O my Jesus! holy and innocent Victim, murdered for my sins and broken for my iniquities, return again to me to-day, so that I may learn a little how to suffer with Thee. I adore Thee in the glory to which Thou callest me, but I adore Thee also on that cross where Thou didst suffer for me. Oh, make Thy cross *of my* cross, and *bind* me *to* the cross, provided it shall be to Thine own.

Lord Jesus, abide with me, for the day falls; abide with me till the day when I shall see Thee *such as Thou art;* and help me now, for I would *rest* myself *on* Thee.

The Temptations of Trial.

'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.'—MICAH vii. 8.

THE *temptations* of *trial* are numerous; at times they are terrible. But all—yes, all of them, from the depression of a sleepless night to the despair of him who would take his own life, from thousands of murmuring voices unto the doubts of unbelief—all may be overcome when one keeps oneself near to Jesus. He has conquered all things, and we, like Him, may conquer all.

Only, let us not lose courage after a defeat. The battles of life are numerous and manifold, and it is often by more than one defeat that we march on to victory. There are glorious defeats, and even our souls often have their Thermopylæ before their Marathon. Take courage, then, and raise thy feeble hands. Do not proudly lay down thy weapons after a *victory,* as if thou hadst henceforth no need

for them; nor throw them away in despair after a defeat, as if already all was lost.

No, *nothing is yet lost.* Jesus watches; let us cast ourselves into His arms. Let us resist the devil, and he will flee from us. We cannot help the birds of Satan from fluttering around our heads; we can help their making their nests in our hearts. The evil is not in being tempted; the irretrievable evil is not even in falling, if, like Peter, we rise in true repentance. The evil lies in yielding to discouragement, and in flying *from* Jesus at the moment when we most need Him, and when He extends His arm to us.

Once again, take good courage, ye who are wounded by the spirit of failure. In falling, seize the hand of Jesus, and be not utterly cast down. The Lord is there; He holdeth your hand.

O Lord Jesus, great Conqueror, help me also to suffer, to fight, to obtain the victory. Dispose my hands for the fight, and prepare my fingers for the battle. Place on my head the helmet of the hope of salvation. Arm my weak hands with the sword of Thy powerful Spirit. Clothe me unceasingly with the shield of faith, that I may be able to quench

all the fiery darts of the wicked; that, persevering in prayer, and making use, with watchfulness, of that excellent weapon which crowns all, I may overcome all and remain firm, to take back to Thee one day the crown of glory.

Lord, hear; Lord, pardon; Lord, be attentive, and perform for us, for the love of Thine infinite mercies!

The Nature of the Suffering.

'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.'—1 Pet. iv. 12.

THE *nature* of the suffering is willed by God, like the suffering itself. The more I reflect, and the more I fathom my heart, the more I recognise with adoration that the continuance, the nature, and the intensity of every suffering are regulated by the sovereign wisdom of Him who is 'wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.' To some more suffering, to others less; to some a longer trial, to others more violent pain; to each one his hour, and to each one also, says the Master, '*according to his ability*.' God loves us one by one. He knows exactly our wants, and 'His eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men.' He strikes us also one by one, and never at a venture, but with a wisdom which is varied in its gifts as in its works. Like an intelligent labourer, who, after having broken the clods of earth,

puts in the wheat in the best place, the barley in its place assigned, and the spelt in its part; for each sort of grain he has different treatment; he does nothing by chance. Thus the Lord acts in the distribution of His crosses as in that of His blessings. If heavier, my cross would crush me; if lighter, it would fail in its end. Our God is a God of order and of peace. He gives to each one a cross proportioned to the nature, as also to the need; to each one He also gives with the cross the strength necessary to carry it.

O my soul, penetrate thyself afresh each day with this sweet assurance. It is, doubtless, a difficult thing, but that is just why thou must ask it of the Lord, in order that thou mayest march on without fear, adoring the God who gives the cross, until the day when thou shalt adore Him in laying down the cross. If thou art deeply impressed with these eternal truths, how much lighter thy cross will become. Therefore, no more barren regrets, no more impious murmurs; but go forward in the name of the Lord, Who helpeth thee to bear thy cross!

And Thou, Lord Jesus, come to my help, *and hold out to* me from heaven Thine hand

of succour. Teach me to accept continued sufferings, which are even more painful than violent pain. Help me to bear the cross as Thou hast borne it, humbly, patiently, constantly, without kicking against the pricks, and blessing the Hand which strikes only to bless. O my Jesus, Saviour of my soul, faithful Shepherd, powerful Support of my weak heart, thus I rely upon Thee, and thus also I shall not be confounded.

Physical Suffering.

'Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.'—2 Cor. xii. 9.

'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'—Rom. viii. 18.

PHYSICAL SUFFERING—a prolonged suffering, without alleviation, without respite, without an end—this is perhaps the greatest trial that man has to bear here below, after the despair of a soul that believes itself to be cast away from God. Physical suffering has thorns which make us shudder, and which, little by little, attenuate at the same time body, spirit, and heart. Ah, the great tempter of our souls knew this well when, after sorrowful bereavements, after the loss of his goods, he covered Job with sore boils, keeping his most formidable scourge to overwhelm him.

Estimate highly, then, the pressure of moral

suffering, but without forgetting that, in this sinful world, it is the frail body that often causes most suffering. And is there not a great source of comfort for this, when, in looking to the cross of Calvary, and to the crown of thorns, we ever know that the Man of Sorrows has suffered more than we have.

The important point is, not what we have to suffer, but the way in which we have learnt to suffer, when God gives us suffering. To suffer with Christ, to suffer without sin, this is essential. How suffering may be transformed, and how the soul may rest quietly, even under the sharpest pain! Conversion for the sinner, the acceptation of the trial for the invalid, are the two greatest gifts that we have to ask, and for which we ought unceasingly to plead on our knees.

O Suffering, we will then—not with our own strength, which is weakness, but in the name of Jesus—accept thee without reticence and without reserve, looking at thee in full face, and not in profile. We will pray to our God, Who gives the suffering, but Who also bestows faith, to bless thy fruit in our hearts. O Grief, how transformed thou art when confronted in the light of eternity, when thou art weighed

in the balance of the sanctuary, when thou art contemplated through the blessed rays which come from Calvary! O Suffering, henceforth we will accept thee, remembering whence thou comest—from the hand of a tender Father; what thou dost work in us—a peaceable fruit of righteousness; reminding ourselves that thou wilt come to an end some day, because thou art the temporary discipline of a sinful world. Yes, *soon* all things shall be made new, soon all shall be explained, soon all shall be sanctified.

And until then, Lord Jesus, Man of Sorrows, Who wilt, even to-day, bear our griefs, leave us not alone. Come and suffer with us, near us, even as Thou hast suffered for us and in our place. Let me suffer upon Thine heart. And Thou, 'O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure;' and even in sufferings, 'let all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice; and let them also that love Thy name be joyful in Thee.' Amen.

God is Love.

'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.'—1 John iii. 1.

God is Love! God loves us; God loves me. There is the great, there is the supreme consolation—the one in the midst of which we must always place ourselves. He loved me as a sinner; He loves me in suffering; He loves me much if I suffer much; He loves me because I suffer; and, as everything that comes from God is lasting, He will love me without fail unto the end.

There are many people who would pass off counterfeit money on the afflicted. The love of our God, that is the royal money, the precious jewel, the pearl of great price. This is the beacon light which brightens the darkest night; this is Jacob's ladder, which unites earth to heaven; this is the sure and stedfast anchor of the soul which holds our vessel in port. Let the tempest come! God loves

us, and nothing shall separate us from this love.

O my soul! afflicted and tossed by the storm, deprived of all comfort, secure thyself firmly on this love; and if, by the Spirit which is given to us, and in keeping the commandments of the Lord, thou art conscious that *He is thine;* if thou canst dwell in God, Who is love—oh then, fear nothing, regret nothing, desire nothing, but advance without dread, as without wishes, towards the port of thy salvation, patiently waiting for the coming of Christ. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him *as He is.*'

O Love, divine, eternal Love, melt the coldness of my poor heart, appease the remorse of my troubled conscience, calm the terrors of my sinful flesh. Crucified Love, come to me, to teach me to suffer with Thee, to die with Thee, to reign with Thee; and let there be only springs of love in my heart towards Thine, as there are from Thine heart to mine, from this time forth and for eternity!

The Peace of Jesus.

'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'—JOHN xiv. 27.

THY PEACE, O JESUS! this is what my troubled soul needs to disperse its fears, to calm its grief; the peace of pardon, of holiness, of confidence, the peace of heaven; in one word, it is indeed the pillow that my weary head requires, even as it is my first delight in the morning.

When, for the last farewell, the father of a family gathers his children around his death-bed, they listen attentively and clasp eagerly to their hearts his every word. Receive thus to thyself, O my soul, the words of thy Beloved. The world has but a deceitful and poisoned peace for thee; thy best friends can only *wish* for thee to have peace; Jesus alone possesses it; He does not wish it for thee, He *gives* it. Not only is He the Prince of Peace, He has '*made peace through the blood*

of His Cross,' but still more, '*He is our peace.'* Go, then, and seek peace where it is to be found, at the foot of the cross.

It is not to be found in the most legitimate affections, nor in the most important labours, nor in the finest works, not even in the sweetest emotions of piety, it is in Christ and in His great salvation.

Hast thou Christ? then thou hast peace. Hast thou peace? then feel deeply thy happiness; give thanks on thy knees, and bless God Who has shown thee the way of peace. Trust thyself to Him with all thine heart to *preserve this true peace*, and that *the peace of God shall hold the chief place in thine heart, and be thankful.* Pray often for those who seek peace, but who have not yet found the treasure.

'Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them.' With peace suffering is explained, trouble is forgotten, death itself loses its terrors. 'What is it to suffer when one has the peace that Jesus gives!' Thus cried a dear child on her bed of pain, and her sweet voice still vibrates in my soul as a comfort and as a hope.

Thy peace, yes, Thy peace, O Jesus! this is

what we ask of Thee on our knees; give it to every soul that is struggling, and is in anguish; give it not by measure, nor according to our feeble requests, but according to Thine infinite pity, and Thine eternal mercy; that we may glorify Thee as children of peace, and with the incorruptibility of a gentle and peaceable spirit, we may grow in Thy grace, and live for Thy glory, while we patiently wait for Thy coming.

The Assurance of Peace.

'Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.'—Isa. lvii. 19.

'All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.'—Isa. liv. 13.

THOU wilt say, perhaps, I have known peace, and after it had smiled to my heart, I lost it. *God has forsaken me*, for I have lost His peace. Ah yes, this, indeed, is the hardest trial of all. At the same time take care, Satan is clever, and he often takes advantage of illness, and the weakness of broken down health, to tempt a soul and plunge it into this abyss. Resist him, and he will fly far from thee. Has not thy peace been sealed with the blood of the Lamb? Is there not balm in Gilead, is there not a Physician there? Come, my brother, believe, and trust thyself, and know that thy very wound itself may bring thee blessing. 'My God, I pray *Thee, tell me* what I should do that I may

recover peace?' When this heart-rending cry has sounded, behold the answer that God Himself doth give, and how His Holy Spirit can write it in letters of fire in all our hearts.

Besides, this state is not an extraordinary one, for it is one which God has caused David, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and thousands of His tried children, to pass through. For what end? We know not, and there is no need that we should know. Perhaps it was to tear away the last shreds of their own righteousness, and to cast them as lost ones into the arms of the Lord. Whatever be the reason, the grace of God was sufficient for them, and it will suffice for thee also. Only, know how to wait. 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.'

Yes, thou must wait, wait patiently, and in waiting, abide quietly, looking to the Lord. Thou must wait and obey, wait and love, wait and content thyself, with simple faith. When the summit of the Alps is wrapt in dark clouds, is their base the less immovable? And when 'the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, the covenant of My peace shall not be removed, saith the Lord.' When the sun is veiled by a passing cloud,

has it disappeared for ever? No, no, for at that same hour it blazes in all its glory, and warms thousands of hearts here below. Wait and pray, and soon He will pierce even thy darkness.

Yes, in short, thou must pray. But dost thou tell me, 'I cannot pray?' Then *cry*, for often the best prayer is no more than a cry of distress, a tear of love, a sob which breaks the heart, but which goes up to awaken our God. Thou canst pray no more? But hast thou courageously tried to do so? Thou canst still look to Jesus, thou canst cast thyself at His feet, saying: 'Thou art my Righteousness and my Peace.' He repels none, He makes no exceptions; and it is the devil, who is a liar from the beginning, that would persuade thee that thou art excluded from the covenant of peace. Come then, my son, come again, whatever thou art. Come and see, come and weep, but come and believe, and, in the name of Jesus, I promise thee thou will not return empty away, and thy peace shall flow like a river, and thy righteouness as the waves of the sea.

Lord Jesus, give us peace! and if we have *lost it,* restore to us Thy peace. And as even

at this hour there are so many poor souls who sigh after Thy peace, we implore Thee, by Thy precious blood, by Thy great love, grant to them this which they can only find near Thee—give them Thy peace. Have pity on spiritual invalids, on the depressed, on the despairing ones, on all those from whom the Comforter has for a time withdrawn Himself. Lord Jesus, powerful Saviour, Who didst yearn with compassion when Thou prayedst for the peace of Jerusalem, be moved again with compassion for these daughters of Zion, for these inconsolable Rachels, for all the poor souls who reject, or who are ignorant of, Thy consolations.

O Jesus, open Thine eyes and see, give ear and hear; let a look of love and a word of peace fall on all those who seek peace. Lord, hear and answer; we earnestly beseech Thee, in the name of Thine infinite mercies, give us Thy peace!

The Invalid's Work.

'Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints."—Rev. xv. 3.

THE USELESSNESS OF THE INVALID weighs on him even more than his suffering. How often have we heard that harrowing cry of pain, 'I am so useless.' The mournful echo still resounds in my ear of a loved voice which said to me one day, 'It is nothing to suffer, if only I could work.' It is the cry of the distressed in all circumstances, in all trial; it is the experience of rich and poor, of the young girl and the old man, of the working man and of the literary man.

This is, then, a voice of conscience, which honours God because there is truth in it; but it may also be the voice of murmuring, and we must be careful to keep it within limits.

The invalid has also his work—a beautiful work,—and to forget it is to mistake the goodness of God for efforts of our own. Without

speaking of all the external work that the Lord may still have left him, he has to struggle with the sin that is within him and around him, to bear witness to the Gospel of his salvation, to worship in suffering, to labour in praying. How many invalid pastors have found a new and a blessed work in their trouble! How many souls have been converted, in any case comforted, by the visit or the prayer of an invalid, or perhaps by the smile of a child! How many secluded lives and prayers weigh more in the scale of eternity than the activity of a strong man, often useless in health! God likes to humble such. He blesses the solitary work of the invalid, and always rewards his efforts in proportion to what they have cost him. It is accepted by the Lord 'according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.' The important thing is, to be faithful each one at the post which the Lord Himself has assigned to us; the thing of importance is, that the Master may be able one day to say to us, as He said of one of old, 'She hath done what she *could*.'

My soul, think of this each day for thine encouragement and thy comfort. Tried breth-

ren, be faithful in little things as in great things, before the world as before the Lord, in suffering as in work, faithful unto death, that you may one day receive a crown of life. He that is faithful in small things shall be greatly established by the Lord.

O Lord, blessed God, faithful God, come to our help, so that we may be able to accept all Thy will, to obey and to understand, to obey without understanding, if need be, to pray in suffering, remembering that 'to obey is more than sacrifice,' and the day will come when every man's work shall be made manifest. Lord, hear our request, and receive the voice of our supplications we implore Thee, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The Intents of the Heart.

'. . . . Until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.'—1 Cor. iv. 5.

THE *intents of the heart*—these are what God regards above all else. He loves the bruised spirit, and the broken heart: He takes account of their least sighs, as of their costliest vows, when they are for His glory. That which we have humbly and seriously wished to do for Him, He regards as actually done; for a man is less great before God for what he has done, than for what he has been willing to do.

This God, who is full of love, who taketh not up that which He hath not laid down, and reapeth not that which He hath not sown, He takes account of the right though hidden intentions of His feeble child, of the good-will which could not come to light, of the earnest desire which like a divine germ re-

mains buried in the poor heart. He gathers our tears in His divine vessels; and the seed sown in the ground, in the midst of tears, is that which is the most precious to Him.

All ye who suffer, and who suffer at being unable to work, the Lord has a golden word for you to-day, well suited to draw you out of the depth of your bitterness: 'God is faithful! and He cannot deny Himself.' There is no treachery in His love; there are no limits to His faithfulness. Take courage, then; in the name of the Lord, take courage. Look to Him, and no more to yourself; look to His justice, and not to your unworthiness.

And do Thou, Lord Jesus, God of love, Thou faithful God, grant me grace never to doubt Thee. May I lie at Thy feet, and await patiently the blessed moment when Thou wilt make manifest the secrets of all hearts; and whether it be in silence, or in solitude, or in martyrdom, may I yet know how to *bless*, and to *adore*. May I learn to kiss that which comes to me from a tender Father, whether His hand opens to smite or to bless. May I always be able to cry, '*My Lord*, and *my God*.'

The Communion of Saints.

'Resist the devil.'—JAMES iv. 7.

'. . . . Stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.'—1 PETER v. 8, 9.

THE communion of saints is never more precious and more full of life than on a bed of suffering; there one learns all at once its reality, its sweetness, its power. How numerous and how touching is the company of our suffering brethren! Our communion with them must be carefully cherished by the Spirit of God, by our loving prayers, and by the work of faith with power; it must be cherished with memory for the past, with prayer for the present, and with hope in the future, in contemplating beforehand, for our infinite comfort, the faithful flock assembled under the rod of the good Shepherd, and led unto the fountains of living waters. O holy family of God's children, sweet connections of love, blessed and lovely jewels, come and revive unceasingly my soul, that is parched by contact with earth; come and calm my

smarting pain; come and prepare me for heaven. Yes, there are warm affections for them that are in Christ Jesus; yes, there is the communion of spirits, and there are alleviations of love. Yes, Lord, henceforth I will pray more night and day for all those who suffer; and feeling, through them, in communion with Thee, I will thus resist the snares of the devil and the temptations of trouble. The numerous family of afflicted ones must feel closely united in Jesus, as the branches in the vine; throughout the whole world they must form a holy confederation, that realises, at the same time, *adoration* and *consolation* in trouble.

O Jesus, wilt Thou, by Thy Holy Spirit, who is the Comforter, accomplish these great things *in* me, and *for* me? Thou, Who art the first-born among many brethren, show me the way, quicken my love, support my faith; and may all my delight be more and more in Thy saints that are on the earth, who say unto Thee, *Thou art the Lord!* For behold it is a good thing for brethren to dwell together in unity; for there the Lord hath commanded blessing, and life for evermore.

Communion with Jesus.

'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'—JOHN xv. 7.

COMMUNION with JESUS, and liberty in prayer; that is what my troubled heart needs to give it peace. But it is well said, that the Lord's promises belong to us in the measure in which we ourselves belong to the Lord. Let us profit by illness to cherish, to vivify, to strengthen our communion with the Beloved; assuring ourselves each day that it is *real*, and not resting on imagination; that it is *indissoluble*, and can resist the darkest days; that it is *active* for the profit of our brethren, and not the dream of a vain sensibility.

Let us carefully cherish it by prayer. And Thou, Lord Jesus, Sovereign Intercessor, and Faithful Advocate, Who ever intercedes for us, give us the *desire*, the *thirst*, for prayer; give us *watchfulness* and *perseverance* in prayer;

give us *liberty* and *happiness* in prayer, so that our joy may be perfect, like Thine, when we pray. May we be able to pray with the confidence of being heard; and wilt Thou hear us, so that we may pray with *more faith.* Let us ever remember that our treasure is in Thy communion, O Jesus, and in the hope of Thy glory. May our prayer *absorb us*, as the holy fire consumes the sacrifice on the altar. Behold, Lord, we cast ourselves at Thy feet as poor beggars; but they know that Thou lovest to give, that Thou art enriched in giving, and they ask the alms of Thy grace only that they may give it in alms to others. We will go, then, we will plead with Thee, and Thou *wilt* hear us, and Thou wilt say to us, Here I am. Certainly Thou wilt be gracious unto us when Thou shalt hear our cry; when Thou shalt hear us Thou wilt answer us. O Lord, teach us how to pray.

Watch and Pray.

'The prayer of faith shall save the sick, . . . and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. . . . Pray one for another.'—JAMES v. 15, 16.

YES, *watch and pray!* and, ye dear sufferers, pray much, pray always. One often hears it sadly said, 'There is nothing left for him but prayer!' Foolish ones! when ye should rather say: 'Prayer remains for him, therefore there is everything to hope!' What! your hand is full of gold, and you beg! What! your heart is filled with the Lord's promises, and you lament! As long as prayer remains to you, *nothing is lost:* take courage, then, and know how to profit by what you have.

Prayer! knowest thou well what it is? It is the rod of Moses, which causes living water to flow in the desert; it is the hidden manna, which nourishes fainting multitudes; it is the ladder of fire, which unites earth to heaven; it is the harp of David, which touches the hardened heart of a Saul; it is the mighty

voice of a Joshua, of a Samuel, of an Eli, leading the battles of the Lord; it is the divine balm laid on the wounds of 'the thorn in the flesh;' it is the strong shield, which quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked; it is the incense of the sanctuary which rises to delight the heart of God!

Pray on then, but give thanks that thou canst, that thou knowest how to, pray. Pray with order and regularity, pray with unction and earnestness, pray with courage and with faith; for all other prayer is but mocking and blasphemy. By prayer grow in intimacy with thy God. Pray a little like Paul, like Luther, like Adolphe Monod, who breathed his last adieu in an ineffable prayer.

O my Jesus! this is what I ask Thee to-day on my knees, in adoration, in trust, and in peace. 'Vouchsafe to me to pray until the end, and, whether it be in anguish or in grief, let my last day upon this sinful earth be above all a day of prayer.'

O Jesus! teach us to pray! for behold Thou hearest prayer in Zion, and unto Thee shall all flesh come.

Prayer in the Name of Jesus.

'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.'—JOHN xvi. 23.

AH! above all pray by the Spirit, and *pray in the name of Jesus.* Let Him be the Alpha and Omega of thy prayer; let Him be in thy heart and on thy lips; let Him be the Soul of thy request, and, at the same time, its Source, and its End. If this is so, thou mayest be the poorest, the most suffering, and the most troubled, yet still thou art rich, and 'all things are yours,' for '*Christ is yours.*' Thus there shall open to thee a world of most sublime realities; thou shalt be on the road of glory; thou shalt ask all things of thy Father, as a child speaks to its father, and '*He will hear* thee.'

But no prayer can be accepted that is not watered by the Eternal Spirit; no sacrifice is acceptable unless presented by the High Priest; no surrender is possible unless made in view of Christ. O my soul, never, then,

enter into the sanctuary without having been washed, prepared, and purified by Jesus, by the blood of the New Covenant!

Jesus, my Lord and my God, Thou art fairer than the sons of men; grace and truth fill Thy lips; Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness, and blessed Thee for ever. Bless me also, and cause me to participate in Thy holy unction; be my model in fighting, in suffering, in prayer. Grant to me now this blessing, and let my soul live and praise Thee for ever. Amen.

Jesus our All.

'My Beloved is mine, and I am His.'—SONG OF SOLOMON ii. 16.

'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.'—COL. ii. 6.

PLACE Jesus in the *centre of thy life;* let Him be in all thine actions; look to Him, and be not hampered with many other thoughts. Do nothing without Him, and undertake nothing without asking thyself, 'What would He have thought, what would He have done, in my place?' Love Him, honour Him, serve Him, with all the powers of thy soul; it is to those who thus love Him that He also gives Himself entirely. Take Him not only for thy Saviour, but also for thy Master; thy soul is so constituted that it *must have a master;* it must give itself to some one. Then from to-day give thyself to Jesus; love what He loves, hate what He hates; obey Him in everything, follow Him everywhere—let Him be thine *all.*

Then, but then only, thou shalt know the

ineffable delight which He has in reserve for those who are given to Him. O my soul, art thou in this joy? hast thou thus received Him? Walk, then, without fear, and remember that thou hast all things in Him. With Him thy tears will be wiped away, and all temptations surmounted. He will be thy Strength in weakness, thy Health in sickness, thy Company in loneliness, thy Refuge against invasion, thy high Tower in all time, thy powerful Shield. He will be *thy Jesus* in the hour of death.

Dost thou delay? dost thou hesitate? Give thyself to Him, give Him all thy heart, and thou shalt have gained all, and nothing more shall be denied to thee. Take Him as thy Saviour, as the Expiator of thy many sins; and then, but then alone, thou shalt see what it is to penetrate even to His heart. Then thou shalt have in Him, 'without variableness or shadow of change,' the tender Shepherd the faithful Counsellor, the best Friend. He will be to thee as a Brother born for adversity; He will be to thee as an apple-tree among the trees of the garden; He will accompany thee unto death; He will receive *thee in His glory.*

'O Jesus, Man of Sorrows and King of Glory, all those that have loved Thee have suffered; but all those that have suffered for Thee have loved Thee the more. Sorrow unites to Thee as mirth unites to the world.' Thus exclaimed Vinet under the grasp of suffering, and under the mighty breathing of the Spirit of God. Millions have had the same experience. Thus, Lord, I ask Thee to fulfil Thy work in me to-day.

'Whom have I in heaven but Thee? There is none upon earth I desire but Thee. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the Strength of my heart, and my Portion for ever.' Lord, I draw near to Thee, and will declare Thy works.

The Way of the Lord.

'Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God: Thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.'—PSA. cxliii. 10.

'Show me Thy ways, O Lord.'—PSA. xxv. 4.

SEARCH out *the way of the Lord* for thee. The most painful days are not those in which one has most to suffer, but those when one has to walk groping, without seeing one's road. Seek and thou shalt find, for the promises of the Lord, to those who seek His will with an honest and true heart, are numerous; they are faithful. Assure thyself well that thou art in the Lord's way; thou mayest do so by carefully consulting His Word, by watchful prayer, by intelligently observing the course of events; thou mayest also know by unusual heart-stirrings and direct impulses of the Holy Spirit; but when once the Lord has lightened thy darkness, and thou seest clearly, then go forward with courage, and in the name of the Lord. Turn not to the right hand nor to the *left;* march on with closed eyes, with the

promises of God in thine heart, and thine hand leaning on Jesus, who can neither deceive thee nor lead thee astray. Cast thyself with Him upon a troop, and leap over a wall; thou wilt find depths, He will fill them; thou wilt encounter mountains too high for thee, He will carry thee, and thou shalt ride upon the high places of the earth; thou shalt pass through the waters, and they shall not overflow thee, and thou shalt walk through the fire and shalt not be burned. This is the way of the Lord. He hath made an highway, that His redeemed should walk there.

O my soul, art thou in this way? There is a source of peace, of light, and of unutterable power, in feeling oneself thus *in the will of God.* One only appreciates it at its true value after having wandered in the darkness of doubt, anguish, and perplexity. O God, Who art just and right, Who teacheth sinners the way wherein they should go, Thou Who hast made so many promises to those who seek Thy will, accomplish them in me this day. Lord, teach me Thy way, and if it should be on a bed of pain, I shall still be in peace. Lighten mine eyes, sustain my heart, guide my steps.

O Lord, be *my Shepherd*, and I shall have no want; lead me beside the still waters, and in the paths of righteousness, for Thy name's sake; and if I must go through the valley of the shadow of death, may Thy rod and Thy staff be there to sustain me. Prepare a table for me in the presence of mine enemies, that thus my cup may be full; and surely I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, and Thy goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. Amen.

Submission.

'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because *Thou* didst it.'—Ps. xxxix. 9.

WOULDEST thou be comforted? Begin by being submissive.

Submission in illness, frank and humble acceptation of thy trial—*there* is the sure means of lightening its weight, and at the same time of glorifying God. The Lord does nothing by chance. Accept, without hesitation and without reserve, all that He sends thee; not with that constraining and icy resignation that says, 'It must be well that this is so,' when in fact you cannot resist the will of an Almighty God; but accept the trial with the free and joyous submission that exclaims with confidence, 'It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good.' He knows my wants, and holdeth all events in His hand. He wills my good, and all that I ask is, that He will pierce me with His love, and enclose me in His heart.

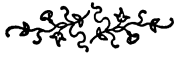
This is true submission, and this is strength

and is peace. It is as milk for the weak and meat for the strong. It is difficult to speak thus, and the only means of learning how to do so is by going to Gethsemane, to the Master's school. Like Him, fall on thy knees, and cry three times, 'O my Father! not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' Then, also, an angel shall descend from heaven to strengthen thee, to relieve thee, to enlighten thee; then, also, shalt *thou* be on the road of submission and of peace.

Go, like St Paul, to thy faithful God, to thy tender Father; ask Him, 'If Thou wilt,' to take away the thorn which makes thee suffer. Nothing is impossible to Him, and His love is unfailing. But after thou hast prayed three times, if, in the plan of His unsearchable wisdom, He yet leaves the thorn, take heed how thou seekest to draw it out with thine own weak hand. Banish complaint and murmur, and cease thine importunate prayer. Rise, full of courage, and know henceforth how to suffer patiently, blessing God, who leaveth thee, *with* the thorn in the flesh, *His grace which sufficeth;* it has sufficed for thousands before thee, why should it not suffice for thee *also?* Knowest thou not that thy God enriches

Himself in giving? Knowest thou not that a saint suffering with patience and with faith is the most blessed sight that the angels of God from the height of heaven can contemplate?

O Lord, grant me what Thou wilt, but grant me strength to be *willing* to have what Thou dost give. Grant to me such great grace that I may be peaceful and submissive—patient in submitting and joyful in relinquishing. '*What* Thou wilt, O my Jesus!—*as* Thou wilt, *where* Thou wilt, *when* Thou wilt.' May this be more and more my motto, that I may learn to surrender all, in order to find all in Thee; that mine may be the humble, serious, and blessed experience, that 'he that hateth his life shall find it.' And when everything fails me, when, perhaps, all my props give way, when my best friends are powerless, then may I feel with happiness how great a thing it is to be *alone*—on the mountain *with Thee.*



Sanctification.

'Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourself likewise with the same mind: for He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.'—1 PETER iv. 1.

WHAT Christ asks for thee is, *sanctification*, even before asking for consolation. Dost thou complain that He leaves thee thy trial? but see, that thing which thou complainest of is to bring the blessing; for a trial that sanctifies is a real treasure, for which we ought to thank God on our knees. If God lays a cross on thee, it is evidently because thou couldst not be sanctified without it; be thankful, then, and profit by it; for this is the will of God, even our sanctification.

He that suffers in some measure like Christ, and whose heart is right, *is sanctified* by suffering, and in this way suffering is the pay of sin; it shows us then sin in its deformity, and in its abominable consequences. Is there a true heart that can rest unmoved before this *frightful* picture?

Surely, under the salutary discipline of the Holy Spirit the heart will thus learn to discern, to hate, and then to leave its sin. Thus, by the sin of the first Adam, suffering entered the world, and death with it; and by the grace of Christ, Who suffered without sin, as the Type of the new race, suffering, like a salutary counter poison, became the means of blessing; it is the purifying fire that consumes the stain of sin. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! O Suffering, what strength to bear thee shall I have henceforth!

But there is no medium; if suffering does not sanctify me, it hardens me. Alas, how many there are, who, despising the rod, and He who hath appointed it, fall thus into great depths. O my soul, examine thyself with care every day, and may suffering teach thee to *suffer*, to *live*, to *die* like Christ; and *in* suffering thou shalt thus constantly separate thyself from sin.

A Pagan said, that the finest spectacle was, a beautiful soul in a fine body; but I know one that even surpasses it in beauty, it is that of a *sanctified soul* in a *suffering body*. Lord, grant that we may see this often.

Merciful God, just and holy God, Who hatest the sin, while still loving the sinner, come and teach me to suffer thus. May mourning detach me from this sinful world; may humiliations draw me to Jesus; may illness find me less selfish, less impatient, less irritable. O Divine Crucified One, come and sanctify me by the cross, so that it shall be the road of glory to me! And thus I shall have the experience of David, and of all the saints, in crying out with them from the depth of the heart, 'It is *good* for me to have been afflicted; now have I kept Thy word.'

Consolation.

'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.'—MATT. v. 4.

IF thou art submissive, if the trial forwards in thine heart the blessed work of sanctification, thou *art already comforted.* My brother, acknowledge that if the afflictions of the people of God are numerous, so the consolations which the Lord grants to them are even more numerous. It is like a river where strong ones find enough water to swim in, whilst the little lamb can cross it with dry feet. It is like a tree which strikes down its roots into the living waters of grace, and whose leaf shall not wither. See, it invites passers-by to gather its sweet fruits, bowing down its branches unto the ground to lower itself within the reach of a little child, or raising them proudly towards the heavens.

The treasury of Divine comforts is never exhausted; but all may be gathered up into three, with numerous ramifications spreading from them. They are—*Submission to the Will*

The Fruit of Trial.

'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.'

SEARCH with care for the *fruit of trial*, and ask Jesus, the celestial Gardener, to preserve it always in thine heart. Thou knowest not now what He is doing? It matters not. Wait and hope; thou shalt know hereafter.

It is said that after a storm of rain the Scotch Highlanders walk over their hills, and then collect the precious stones which shine here and there on the ground in the rays of a morning sun. Thus it often happens, that after a rough storm a ray from the Sun of grace causes the jewels of heaven to be resplendent in thy soul. There must be some such lives ploughed up by trial, to show clearly that there is a *grace which is sufficient.* It is here that one finds best those sweet fruits of

the Spirit, which are Joy, Love, Holiness, and Peace. But often a tree has to be pruned for a long time before it yields its good fruit; the diamond must be laboriously cut before it shines in all its brightness. There are invalids who can only recover health at the cost of long and painful operations. Thus the school of trouble may become a school of true blessing for thee.

A tried soul walks in the path that the Lord traces out for her humbly, calmly, without great excitements, avoiding exaggerated joys, as well as useless troubles. She has her heights and her depths, but the grace of God always harmonises them well, and keeps her constantly in an atmosphere of peace. A little contents her, for many deceptions have taught her that 'all is vanity.' She expects little from men, still less from circumstances, much from the Lord. Always calm and sober, she is not elated in prosperity, despairs not in adversity. She knows how to sympathise with the infirmities of the weak; she raises those that have fallen, and her greatest joy is *to resist evil*, and to see the conversion of a poor sinner. Severe towards herself, indulgent for others, she does not give umbrage by

wounding words, nor think that susceptibility is a virtue.

In proportion as she has lost the joys of health, a gentle voice—the voice of the Beloved—has whispered in her ears, 'Fear not, I am with thee'—'thy Chiefest among ten thousand.' She sees the invisible, she possesses reality; and this, indeed, is the *most* lovely fruit of trial. She regards time and eternity in their true proportions—time, which quickly snatches away our vanities as it flies; eternity, which approaches with its glorious realities!

O my soul! then fear no more when God asks thee to sacrifice thine Isaac. Knowest thou not that 'in the mount of the Lord *it shall be seen'?* These great things are true, thou knowest well. Wilt thou not, once for all, experience them? Behold, Jesus stands at the door and knocks; open to Him, that He may sup with thee, and thou with Him. *Then fear no more; only believe!* All thy trials will end well, and thy happiness shall be eternal; but say often to thyself that the time of trial will not always last, and that thou must improve it to-day.

O God of mercy! I adore Thee as I lie in

the dust; I bless Thee, in the depth of mine heart, that trial can thus detach me from this world sunk in evil, can draw me to Thyself, can ripen me for heaven! Bless me in trial, bless me by trial; and may I patiently glorify Thee in all my afflictions. I ask great things of Thee, but Thou knowest why I ask Thee for them. Thou knowest the Name in which I plead with Thee; Thou pleasest Thyself in giving liberally. I pray to Thee in the name of Jesus, and in my inmost heart Thy Spirit assures me that Thou hast already heard me.

An Invalid's Day.

'Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'—HEB. xiii. 5.

AN *Invalid's day* is not so sad as a superficial observer might think—one who sees our pains, but who cannot appreciate our joys. A soul that has peace, carries everywhere with her, her great cause of joy; besides, she is a precious jewel, worthy to adorn the royal crown of the Lord Jesus.

Establish thyself from the morning in the peace which God has given thee; keep thyself near Him, happy in His care and strong in His love. Do not have many schemes; above all, never be a slave to them. Live from day to day: on the good days, do valiantly all that is in thy power; do it well, and thus gather to thyself new force to resist new sufferings. If thy plans succeed, thank God; if they fail, do not fret, thou wilt not for that be a disinherited child; thou art only an unprofitable servant,

as we all are. Have no other plan than to accomplish hour by hour the *will of God;* His eye watches over thee, and when all around thee changes, He changeth not. That which the Lord hath resolved on endureth for ever.

Above all, never despair; to do so dishonours the Lord, without in any way improving thine own affairs; the battle that is lost to-day may be gained to-morrow; God is here, and it is He Himself Who saith to troubled hearts, 'Take courage, behold thy God; He will come and He will deliver thee.'

Thus go peacefully until the evening; then thank God, for thou art nearer the end; rehearse the kindnesses of the Lord, and give thanks for His trials. Pray to Him as if thou wouldest not again see a new day-break; commit to Thy God the anxieties of the morrow: He will take care of thee to-morrow and the day after, if need be; and even still much longer, for His mercy endureth *for ever.* Dear invalid, if thou knowest these things thou art blessed, provided thou dost practise them; thou hast learnt much, if thou knowest what is meant by the word of the Lord, 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'

Eternal Lord, sustain my feeble hands and my trembling knees; let the joy of Thy salvation restore my heart every instant. O Lord, wilt Thou Thyself lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help? my help cometh from the Lord, Who hath made heaven and earth: keep me as the apple of Thine eye; be my Shade, hold me by my right hand; preserve my soul from all evil, and preserve me in my going out, and in my coming in, O Lord, Thou faithful God, from this time forth and for ever.

'*Lo, I am with you alway, unto the end of the world.*'

The Promises of God.

'Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.' —1 PETER iv. 19.

'YES, indeed, O God, Thou art good, merciful and faithful. I come now to Thee, resting myself on Thy promise, which cannot deceive me, for I am suffering, and Thou art faithful: I commend myself to Thy favour. I consecrate myself to Thee altogether, with all my sufferings, with all my sorrows, with all that I am, with all that I have, with all that I can do, remembering that Thou lovest broken and bruised hearts, and being well assured that, if Thou dost extend Thine hand to me, I shall not be left to perish. O my God! I count on Thy love, I remind myself of Thy promise, I believe in Thy great salvation, and I come in the name of Jesus, in the name of Him Who hath said, 'Come unto Me and I will give you rest.'

But, poor soul, buffeted by the storm, 'This promise,' wilt thou say, 'is it good to *me?*' Yes, beloved one, it is for thee, *if thou belongest to the Lord*, for all the good things of God are for us, and the *promises of God* are the heritage of the children of God. The most special, like the most general, even those that were made to the people of God under the old covenant, to a Moses, to a Joshua, to a David, all are to thee, if thou art graffed into the good olive tree; the grandest promises are *thy* property, if thou, like David, acknowledge thyself to be unworthy, if thou walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh.

Acknowledge, then, thy privileges, and hold fast that thou hast; it is not stealing from the Lord, it is being put in possession of thy glorious inheritance; be faithful unto death—it is not from thy God that unfaithfulness will come,—and thou shalt receive a crown of life!

'Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?' Even if thou shouldest be in the tomb, like Lazarus, thy faith could come forth victorious; believe, even like Mary, and thou shalt see glory, not only in the great Resurrection day, *but in all the* details of thy life.

'He is faithful that promised.' 'Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it.' 'Heaven and earth shall pass away: My words shall not pass away.'

O Lord, seal by faith in my heart Thine everlasting promises; for I receive them with humility; may I profit by them with adoration, and all for Thy glory.

Illness.

'Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest Him out of Thy law; that Thou mayst give him rest from the days of adversity.' —PSA. xciv. 12, 13.

THE *time of illness* is a serious time; make it to be also, by God's help, a blessed time. In depressing bodily powers, it exercises and develops those of the soul; it puts our faith to the proof, it purifies our zeal, and gives life to our love. It makes us humble, merciful, patient, and strong; it puts us in the right way, in snatching us even with violence from the covetousness of the world, to throw us, bruised as we are, into the arms of the Lord; thus it gives to us that which nothing else in the world could give us. Murmur not, then, at that which may become a real good. O Suffering! here below thou art called a heavy burden; but if we can face thee in the light of eternity, thou wilt only be a glorious privilege. All are not worthy of thee, and the Lord only causes us to pass

through the baptism of fire, that afterwards He may place us under the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

But what sayest thou? that these are but poetical chimeras, or dreams of imagination? Listen again: young people have suffered, old people have suffered, and all have given the same testimony, whether in silence or in ecstasy, in pain and in martyrdom. Therefore listen, then believe; worship, and go and do likewise.

'One can glorify God in all circumstances. Good God! give us, I pray Thee, heavenly life. One prays much better for others, when one is suffering.' Is this the voice of a saint? No, it is that of a child who suffered terrible pain.

'In the happy solitude of my illness, in a world of peace, of repose, and of love, I reflected that, in the profession of my Saviour, it mattered little to me what He would send to me. I suffer much; but it is the will of God, and I am happy.' Is this the voice of a prophet? No, it is that of a young girl, who suffered long, and who was supported by the love of God even unto the end.

Listen again; this is the voice of an old

man breathing out his last sigh—it is already the voice of heaven!

'I am in reality . . . . how little and paltry is everything in this world! on the other side, all is great, all is beautiful. I contemplate my realities; I will know nothing but Jesus crucified: holy, holy, holy is the Lord!'

This is the voice of the Spirit of God; it is the voice of the experience of the saints. O my brother, despise not, then, the chastening of the Lord, or it will be evil to thee; and also lose not courage when He reproveth thee; this would be to slight His promises, and unbelief is a great sin.

Merciful and pitiful God, have pity upon all those who suffer, for all who suffer in this world of sin; have pity upon me, for I suffer. Thy glory is to be loved; Thy glory, also, is to have pity. Come unto me, O Thou very good God; give not unto me piety without suffering, but give not to me too much suffering for my weak faith. Thou lovest me, that is sufficient for me. I will sleep in peace on Thy bosom,—and I wait.

Preparation.

'Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, ... looking unto Jesus. . . . . Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.'—HEB. xii. 1–3.

LOOK *unto Jesus*, look upon those who have suffered with Jesus, and look not at thyself; for one look turned to thine own suffering, look ten times upon Jesus, and contemplate Thy King in the splendour of His glory. Behold Him Who cometh upon the clouds of heaven, and prepare thyself for thy meeting with thy God.

Eternity is nearer to the invalid than to one in health, and this of itself is a great blessing. God prepareth thee for the marriage supper of the Lamb; praise Him, and live in the power of eternity. Let no day pass by without thy taking count afresh of the riches of thy hopes; and by one of our beautiful hymns, by meditation on the promises of God, by prayer, draw

nearer each evening to that eternal morning of which thou wilt see the dawn to break forth.

O Lord God, how great Thou art! how solemn, how terrible Thou art without Christ! how gentle Thou art to the redeemed of the Lord! Joy without pain, a holy activity without the body of humiliation, an eternal weight of a glory that is infinite and excellent. O my God, is this, indeed, for me?

Lord, I fall at Thy feet, I worship Thee; hold me close to Thee, and make me worthy one day to cast my crown before the Throne, saying with all the saints, 'All is well.' 'Salvation to our God, ... and unto the Lamb'! Amen.

The Last Combat.

'Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine.'—ISA. xliii. 1.
'Lord, make me to know mine end.'—PSA. xxxix. 4.

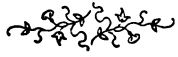
WITH this promise, with this prayer, thou canst go forward without fear to enter upon *the last combat.* Christ has conquered all; by His death He has 'brought life and immortality to light,' and in the very heart of the grave He thought of thee. 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' And now time is gone; illness has taken final leave, with all its train of humiliations and pains; that which thou shalt regret upon thy death-bed is not thy sufferings, but the folly through which thou hast profited so little by them! For those who live near the Lord, there is more true life in one hour of suffering than there is in a day full of health; put it out, then, to thine advantage, like gold. Often ask the Lord that He will grant to thee a humble, a Christian, a peaceful end; that He would allow

you the comfort of having a faithful friend ever at thy side, to remind thee of His promises and to advise thee. Beseech Him to engrave in thy soul the holy and calm image of thy Saviour. O pray that He will not veil His face from thee, that nothing shall separate thee from Him, and that His redeeming love may support thee unto the end.

Wait thus in peace, without impatience and without fear; commit thy redeemed soul into the hands of Him Who has paid its ransom, and repeat again by the Spirit, '*It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good!*'

O Jesus! come quickly! I adore Thee, I sigh and I wait. 'Lord, make no long tarrying.'

'*Behold I come quickly! and what I say, ... I say to all, Watch.*



Adoration.

'Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.'—Rev. iii. 11.

'And they shall reign for ever and ever.'—Rev. xxii. 5.

O Jesus, I worship Thy love, I trust myself to Thine Almighty grace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation; sustain me unto the end, and grant that I may bear everything with patience, with gentleness, and with joy.

Yes, Lord Jesus, *Thy love is stronger than death*, and when the valley of the shadow of death is still darker, Thy love, like a bright beacon, is sufficient to disperse its gloom. O Jesus! leave me not; support Thy weak child; warm the poor sheep upon Thine heart; remind me unceasingly, that, after having opened to me the gate of the Heavenly City, Thou wilt not leave me to perish on the threshold.

O my Jesus, how beauteous Thou art in the brightness of Thy majesty, and in the

splendour of Thy glory! for it is such a glory as that of the only Son of the Father; and behold I shall be for ever with Thee .... for ever with the Lord!

'These sayings are faithful and true.' 'For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us.'

'Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.'

THUS MAY IT BE!